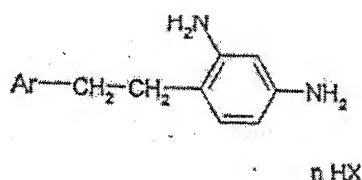


In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1 to 10 and add the following new claims 11 to 24:

Claims 1 to 10. (canceled)

11. (new) A m-diaminobenzene compound of formula (I):



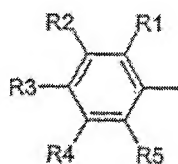
(I),

wherein

n is a number such that $0 \leq n \leq 3$,

HX stands for an organic or inorganic acid, and

Ar denotes a naphthyl group, a methylenedioxyphenyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted or benzo-condensed five- or six-membered heteroaromatic group, or a benzo-aromatic group of formula (II)



(II),

wherein **R1** to **R5**, independently of each other, each denote a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitrile group, a carboxamido group, an acetylamino group, a straight-chain or branched C₁-C₁₂-alkyl group, a straight-chain or branched C₁-C₁₂-alkoxy group, a straight-chain or branched C₁-C₁₂-

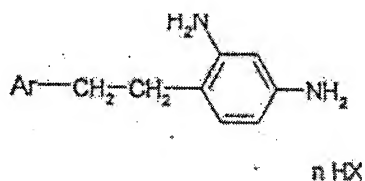
alkylamino group, a straight-chain or branched di-(C₁-C₆)-alkylamino group, a phenyl group, a morpholino group, a pyrrolidino group, a piperidino group, a piperazino group, a C₂-C₄-hydroxyalkyl group, a C₂-C₄-hydroxyalkoxy group, a benzyloxy group, a trifluoromethyl group, or a methylsulfonyl group; and with the proviso that **Ar** is not an imidazolyl group.

12. (new) The m-diaminobenzene compound as defined in claim 11, wherein **Ar** denotes a pyridinyl group, a furyl group, a thienyl group, a pyrrol group, an indolyl group, or a pyrazolyl group.

13. (new) A m-diaminobenzene compound selected from the group consisting of
1,3-diamino-4-(2-phenylethyl)benzene dihydrochloride,
1,3-diamino-4-[2-(4-methylphenyl)ethyl]benzene,
1,3-diamino-4-[2-(1-naphthyl)ethyl]benzene dihydrochloride,
1,3-diamino-4-[2-(4-methoxyphenyl)ethyl]benzene,
1,3-diamino-4-[2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]benzene dihydrochloride,
1,3-diamino-4-[2-(4-hydroxyphenyl)ethyl]benzene,
1,3-diamino-4-{2-[4-(dimethylamino)phenyl]ethyl}benzene trihydrochloride,
4-[2-(4-cyanophenyl)ethyl]-1,3-diaminobenzene dihydrochloride,
1,3-diamino-4-[2-(4-pyridinyl)ethyl]benzene trihydrochloride,
1,3-diamino-4-[2-(3-pyridinyl)ethyl]benzene trihydrochloride,
1,3-diamino-4-[2-(4-biphenyl)ethyl]benzene dihydrochloride,
1,3-diamino-4-[2-(2,4-dimethoxyphenyl)ethyl]benzene,

1,3-diamino-4-[2-(4-hydroxy-3-methoxyphenyl)ethyl]benzene,
 1,3-diamino-4-[2-(3,4,5-trihydroxyphenyl)ethyl]benzene,
 1,3-diamino-4-{2-[4-(2-hydroxyethoxy)phenyl]ethyl}-benzene,
 1,3-diamino-4-[2-(2-thienyl)ethyl]benzene,
 1,3-diamino-4-[2-(2-furyl)ethyl]benzene,
 1,3-diamino-4-[2-(5-methyl-2-furyl)ethyl]benzene,
 1,3-diamino-4-[2-(1H-indol-3-yl)ethyl]benzene,
 1,3-diamino-4-[2-(1-methyl-1H-indol-3-yl)ethyl]benzene and
 1,3-diamino-4-[2-(2-pyridinyl)ethyl]benzene trihydrochloride.

14. (new) An agent for oxidative dyeing of fibers, said agent comprising a dye carrier composition and at least one m-diaminobenzene compound of formula I:



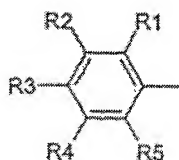
(I),

wherein

n is a number such that $0 \leq n \leq 3$,

HX stands for an organic or inorganic acid, and

Ar denotes a naphthyl group, a methylenedioxyphenyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted or benzo-condensed five- or six-membered heteroaromatic group, or a benzo-aromatic group of formula (II)



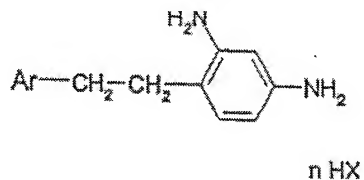
(II),

wherein **R1** to **R5**, independently of each other, each denote a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitrile group, a carboxamido group, an acetylamino group, a straight-chain or branched C₁-C₁₂-alkyl group, a straight-chain or branched C₁-C₁₂-alkoxy group, a straight-chain or branched C₁-C₁₂-alkylamino group, a straight-chain or branched di-(C₁-C₆)-alkylamino group, a phenyl group, a morpholino group, a pyrrolidino group, a piperidino group, a piperazino group, a C₂-C₄-hydroxyalkyl group, a C₂-C₄-hydroxyalkoxy group, a benzyloxy group, a trifluoromethyl group, or a methylsulfonyl group; and with the proviso that **Ar** is not an imidazolyl group.

15. (new) The agent as defined in claim 14, containing from 0.01 to 20 weight percent of said at least one m-diaminobenzene compound of the formula I.

16. (new) The agent as defined in claim 14, further comprising a developer compound and/or a coupler compound and/or a direct dye compound, and wherein said coupler compound is not said at least one m-diaminobenzene of the formula I.

17. (new) A ready-to-apply composition for oxidative dyeing of fibers, said ready-to-apply composition comprising a dye carrier composition, an oxidant, and at least one m-diaminobenzene compound of formula I:



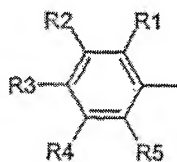
(I),

wherein

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Ar denotes a naphthyl group, a methylenedioxyphenyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted or benzo-condensed five- or six-membered heteroaromatic group, or a benzo-aromatic group of formula (II)



(II),

wherein **R1** to **R5**, independently of each other, each denote a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitrile group, a carboxamido group, an acetylamino group, a straight-chain or branched C₁-C₁₂-alkyl group, a straight-chain or branched C₁-C₁₂-alkoxy group, a straight-chain or branched C₁-C₁₂-alkylamino group, a straight-chain or branched di-(C₁-C₆)-alkylamino group, a phenyl group, a morpholino group, a pyrrolidino group, a piperidino group, a

piperazino group, a C₂-C₄-hydroxyalkyl group, a C₂-C₄-hydroxyalkoxy group, a benzyloxy group, a trifluoromethyl group, or a methylsulfonyl group; and with the proviso that **Ar** is not an imidazolyl group.

18. (new) The ready-to-apply composition as defined in claim 17, wherein said oxidant is hydrogen peroxide.

19. (new) The agent as defined in claim 14, consisting of a hair colorant.

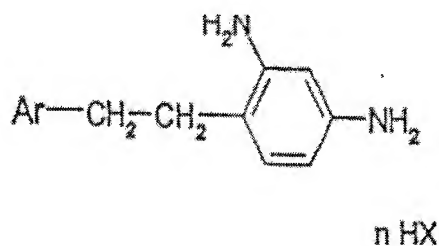
20. (new) A method of oxidatively dyeing fibers, said method comprising the steps of:

a) applying a ready-to-apply composition for dyeing fibers to the fibers in an amount sufficient for the dyeing of the fibers;

b) allowing the ready-to-apply composition to act on the hair for about 10 to 45 minutes at about 15°C to 50°C; and then

c) rinsing the ready-to-apply composition from the fibers;

wherein said ready-to-apply composition comprises a dye carrier composition, an oxidant, and at least one m-diaminobenzene compound of formula I:



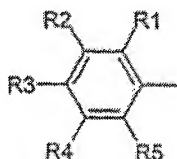
(I),

wherein

n is a number such that $0 \leq n \leq 3$,

HX stands for an organic or inorganic acid, and

Ar denotes a naphthyl group, a methylenedioxyphenyl group, a substituted or unsubstituted or benzo-condensed five- or six-membered heteroaromatic group, or a benzo-aromatic group of formula (II)



(II),

wherein **R1** to **R5**, independently of each other, each denote a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a hydroxyl group, a nitrile group, a carboxamido group, an acetylamino group, a straight-chain or branched C₁-C₁₂-alkyl group, a straight-chain or branched C₁-C₁₂-alkoxy group, a straight-chain or branched C₁-C₁₂-alkylamino group, a straight-chain or branched di-(C₁-C₆)-alkylamino group, a phenyl group, a morpholino group, a pyrrolidino group, a piperidino group, a piperazino group, a C₂-C₄-hydroxyalkyl group, a C₂-C₄-hydroxyalkoxy group, a benzyloxy group, a trifluoromethyl group, or a methylsulfonyl group; and with the proviso that **Ar** is not an imidazolyl group.

21. (new) The method as defined in claim 20, wherein said oxidant is hydrogen peroxide or an addition compound of hydrogen peroxide to urea, melamine, or sodium bromate.

22. (new) The method as defined in claim 20, wherein said oxidant is an aqueous solution of hydrogen peroxide containing from 1 to 12 % of said hydrogen peroxide.

23. (new) The method as defined in claim 22, wherein said dye carrier composition and said oxidant are mixed with one another in a weight ratio of from about 5:1 to 1:3 to form said ready-to-apply composition.

24. (new) The method as defined in claim 20, wherein said ready-to-apply composition has a pH of 6 to 10.5.